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ABSTRACT

The traditional model of linguistic proficiency has been a monolingual one that ignores the worth of communicating in two languages in a single speech situation. An alternative view is explored in which the two languages are components of a single skill, communication. Segments of a Spanish language interview with a bilingual Mexican-American child are analyzed in order to illustrate the integrated use of two languages in a single communicative event. The roles of the participants and the goals of the adult and child in the interaction are discussed. The ways in which the child exhibits his bilingual proficiencies demonstrate successful communication through complementary use of bilingual skills in socially situated discourse. Such accomplishments have not been adequately recognized in existing evaluations of language proficiency or traditional bilingual theory. (Author/RW)

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LINGUISTIC PROFICIENCY: HOW BILINGUAL DISCOURSE CAN SHOW THAT A CHILD HAS IT

Maryellen García

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LINGUISTIC PROFICIENCY: HOW BILINGUAL DISCOURSE CAN SHOW THAT A CHILD HAS IT*

Maryellen García

Questions about the language proficiencies of bilingual children are becoming increasingly important in bilingual education, yet the field of bilingualism is encumbered with terminology and tenets which may be inhibiting the formulation of meaningful questions of bilingual linguistic proficiency. The traditional model of linguistic proficiency has been a monolingual one, implicitly denying the worth of communicating in two languages in a single speech situation. Because of this view, an individual's bilingual linguistic proficiency has traditionally been evaluated on the basis of discrete successes or failures in one or the other language, considered one at a time. An alternative view, presented here, is that a bilingual uses his or her linguistic repertoire as part of an integrated communication resource, and that the languages are merely the verbal components of a single skill, that of communication.

The paper examines bilingual child-adult discourse in the context of socially situated and structured interaction, i.e., an interview, illustrating the integrated use of two languages in a single communicative event. This treatment includes a discussion of the rights and obligations of the participants in the primarily Spanish-language interview, examines the goals of the adult and child in the interaction, and demonstrates how the child exhibits his bilingual proficiencies within that interaction. The examples--segments of the interview--are important in that they illustrate successful communication through the concurrent and complementary use of bilingual linguistic skills in socially situated discourse, an accomplishment which has not been adequately recognized in traditional bilingual theory, nor in exisiting assessments of bilingual linguistic proficiency.

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LINGUISTIC PROFICIENCY: HOW BILINGUAL DISCOURSE CAN SHOW THAT A CHILD HAS IT

Maryellen García

1. Introduction

Judgments about the linguistic proficiency in bilinguals--especially for the practical purposes of educating bilingual children--are often made without an understanding of how the knowledge of two languages may function together as a single communication resource. Hypotheses advanced in previous theoretical work in bilingualism have often been canonized as fact; the necessity of applying the available theoretical constructs to practical problems in bilingual education has precluded the critical testing of the theories of the early sixties. The area of language testing is one in which the need for theoretical and empirical work is great, but the necessity for application based on existing theories has been greater. Current notions of linguistic proficiency, reflected in language tests, are based on a monolingual model of language use, whereby it is appropriate to speak only in one language at a time in one situation. These attitudes toward the appropriate use of language have become widespread; many educators feel that mixing languages is undesirable linguistic behavior, falling outside the bounds of true linguistic proficiency. This negative attitude is implied by the term 'linguistic interference,' sometimes applied to such phenomena.

Because linguistic proficiency is equated with monolingual proficiency, a bilingual child's linguistic proficiency is assessed on the basis of how well he or she can speak one language at a time, an expectation about

language use which is foreign to the experience of many bilingual children. Furthermore, such evaluations of monolingual proficiency are usually based on the results from a language assessment instrument, administered in a highly artificial speech situation created solely for the purpose of evaluating language, not for purposes of communication. Because linguistic proficiency is usually equated with producing the correct sounds, grammatical forms, and syntactically correct responses in the one language that is being used in the evaluation, a child is deemed to be linguistically proficient in two languages, i.e., a proficient bilingual, only upon demonstrating the formally correct usage of each language independently of the other in such a testing situation. An alternative view, presented here, is that a bilingual child uses his or her linguistic repertoire, i.e., the languages at his or her disposal, as part of a single, fully integrated communication resource, and that the languages are to be evaluated as components of a single skill, that of communication.

Much of this presentation examines the question of the linguistic proficiency of bilinguals as it is reflected in a child-adult interview, a speech situation which is similar to that created by adults who administer language assessment instruments to children. The discourse in which the child exhibits his linguistic proficiency is not in his own monologues, for the interview format does not allow for them. Discourse is used here in its interactive sense. Each turn taken by the participants in the interview is part of the discourse. The linguistic proficiency exhibited is that of the child's ability to communicate in a difficult, artificial speech situation. The fact that the primary

language of the interaction is in Spanish, and the child provides some of his responses in English does not detract from the fact that they serve the interactional and communicative goals of the interview. Because the complementary use of two languages in a single situation is not usually recognized as a type of linguistic proficiency, in the next section I discuss this possibility in terms of the traditional thinking on linguistic proficiency and the broader notion of communicative competence.

2. Proficiency

The traditional approach to describing proficiency may be found in Mackey (1968). He talks about proficiency in terms of an individual's mastery of 'all four basic skills,' i.e., comprehension and expression in both oral and written language. He further notes that mastery of a skill is not uniform across the various linguistic levels, which he identifies as: phonological (or graphic), grammatical, lexical, semantic, and stylistic. He writes, 'What has to be described is proficiency in two sets of related variables, skills, and levels' (1968:556). Table 1, taken from his article, illustrates the levels and skills which he refers to.

Table 1: Mackey's levels of linguistic proficiency

Skills	*Degree*									
	Levels									
	Phonological-Graphic		Grammatical		Lexical		Semantic		Stylistic	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Listening										
Reading										
Speaking										
Writing										

While it seems reasonable to include these components into a general measure of 'proficiency' it ignores the importance of the social element of language use. Recognition of the socio-cultural context in which language operates has led to the characterization of linguistic proficiency as communicative competence. Communicative competence is a term discussed at length in Hymes (1972) and generally accepted in recent literature on language use in educational contexts as the most useful way of characterizing linguistic competence (e.g., Cazden, John, Hymes 1972). It is the view that knowing a language means being proficient not only in the grammatical forms and attendant skills of the language, but in its appropriate use in its social and cultural settings. Because communicative competence includes the more traditional aspects of linguistic proficiency and adds another aspect of proficiency, the socio-cultural dimension, to its characterization, it seems the preferable, more inclusive concept by which to characterize linguistic proficiency. This is illustrated in Figure 1, based on Mackey's Table 1. Communicative competence in the interview situation to be examined means that the participants speak a language or languages appropriate to the participants and the setting of the situation, in addition to using linguistic forms appropriate to the discourse.

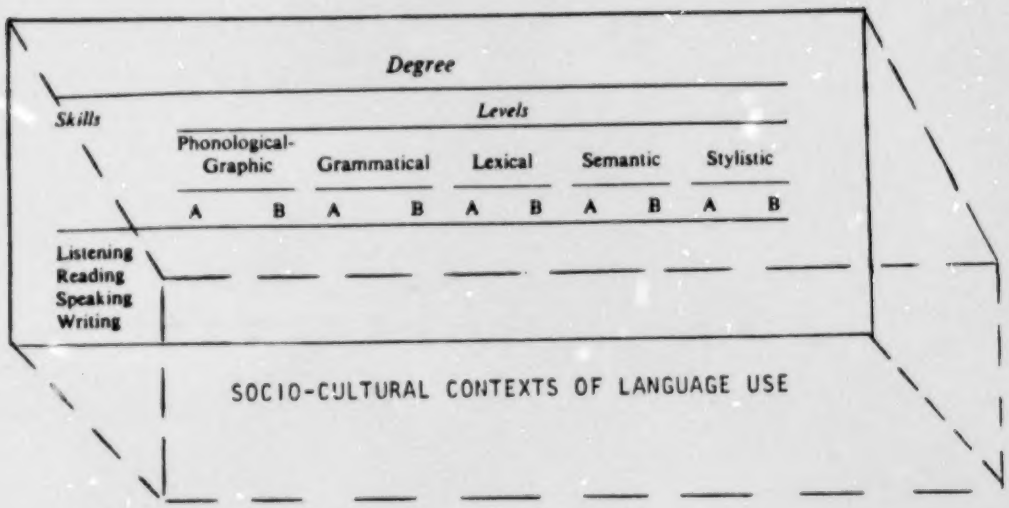

Figure 1: Linguistic proficiency as a basis for communicative competence

3. Source of Data

The data analyzed are segments of a Spanish language interview with a bilingual Mexican-American child. The interview was one of 24 which were done as part of a project in the Foreign Language Education Center at the University of Texas at Austin in 1967.[1] The project was under taken to survey the language of pre-school five-year-olds in Texas, who were selected to participate because they were able to converse in both Spanish and English. It was expected that the language samples would be used in the future for linguistic analysis and vocabulary studies. One of the objectives of the fieldwork was to get fifteen-minute interviews in both languages from each of the children in the survey. The interviews all followed the same basic format, the adult interviewers using pictures and toys in eliciting various types of responses from the children. The most familiar of these stimuli is probably the set of

photographs used in the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (ITPA), which also provides for some of the elicitation protocols used in the interviews.[2]

I should point out that the interview portion of the data collection effort was not intended to elicit connected discourse. The interviews attempted to collect language samples from the children in a specified interview format. Provisions were made for collecting other types of language output from the child, as the team also elicited dialogues, which called for more connected discourse (Cornejo, 1969:56). Transcripts of those language samples where not available for analysis, however. In using one of the interviews in this analysis, my purpose is to comment on child-adult interviews in general, especially because language collected in interview situations such as this is often used as a reflection of linguistic competence. This particular interview serves to illustrate a bilingual communicative competence rather than a monolingual linguistic proficiency. It shows that, although little real communication takes place, the child knows enough about the interview situation to get through it successfully, using his knowledge of language and discourse to achieve that goal.

The interview selected for analysis here was chosen[3] because the child appeared to be an exceptionally effective communicator within the limits of the situation he found himself in. The child understood that the goals of the interaction were for him to respond as cooperatively as possible to the questions put to him by the adult interviewer. He was very good at understanding the type of response that was expected when the elicitation format changed. Forthermore, although the primary language of the interview was Spanish, the child's use of English in the

instances when he used it were often grammatically and semantically appropriate to the question in Spanish which elicited it. The child had the ability to integrate the two languages in the discourse, showing an awareness that switching to English would be appropriate to the language abilities of the interviewer and at the same time consistent with the communicative goals of the situation.

The following section examines how this linguistic proficiency is manifested in the discourse, identifying the goals of the interaction for each of the participants, noting the effect of the secondary language choices of the child on the goals of the interaction, how they seem to be evaluated by the adult in the situation, and their appropriateness to the discourse in terms of the semantics and the syntax of the previous person's turn in the dialogue.

4. The Speech Situation

The speech situation in which this discourse takes place is that of a two-party interview. Using the structure of a typical interview as a model, we know that each participant has a different role to play. One party, the interviewer, controls turn-taking and topic selection by posing questions or otherwise prompting responses. The other party, the interviewee, usually does not have the right to ask questions of the interviewer, or to initiate new topics in the discourse. The interviewee may ask clarification questions, and may expand a response until it is felt that enough information has been given. To be minimally cooperative in an interview, the interviewee responds to the interviewer's questions with a response which is syntactically and propositionally appropriate

to the question in the previous turn in the discourse. The interviewer may reinforce the responses elicited by his/her questions and, in normal adult-adult interaction, signals a topic shift in the interview by an appropriate verbal marker, such as: 'To change the subject . . .,' or, 'Speaking of . . .,' and so on. Abrupt topic change in an adult conversation may be interpreted as rudeness on the part of the topic-changer, or as negative reinforcement of the response. With a child, the adult interviewer may not feel the need to mark topic change in the discourse due to the respective statuses of the participants.

In child-adult interviews, a social imbalance exists because the adult is perceived by the child as more knowledgeable about the world in general. That perception of the adult as world authority, together with the adult's role as interviewer in this interactional context, makes the adult very powerful in this situation. In the case of an interview with a Mexican-American child, there is a cultural tradition of respecting one's elders which may affect the child's performance in the interview situation toward maximum cooperation with the interviewer.

The interview which is analyzed here takes place in the living room of the home of the child to be interviewed, which provides an informal setting for the interaction. The participants are an adult male interviewer, bilingual in Spanish and English, and a five-year-old boy who has been judged to be a balanced bilingual on the basis of a previous conversation. The reason for the interview is to sample the child's Spanish language production. The interviewer does this by using illustrations and objects to provide the topics of the discourse, and by using a variety of language elicitation strategies, including sentence

completion, information questions about the pictures, requests for elaboration, and requests for description. As previously mentioned, the interview is 15 minutes long. For this microanalysis of the interactive discourse of the interview, I have selected 2 segments which seem to be representative.

5. Analysis of Discourse

The interactional goals of the discourse are not those which would be expected of a typical interview between adults, in which one party would be trying to obtain information about the other, or would be evaluating the other person in light of his or her responses as in a job interview. In this child-adult interview, communication between the participants, for instance, the exchange of information, ideas, opinions, and the like, is not an important interactional goal, even though some communication must take place in order for the discourse to serve the purpose of eliciting a Spanish language sample for the child. The information communicated by the interviewer to the child is more important than vice-versa because the child needs to anticipate what the interviewer will accept as an appropriate response. The interviewer's goal for the interaction seems to be to keep the interview moving through the elicitations to obtain a maximum number of responses. The child's goal for the interaction seems to be full cooperation with the interviewer to get through the unfamiliar situation as quickly as possible. We keep these interpretations in mind as we analyze the selected segments of the interview:

SEGMENT I: Word Elicitation

		Interview Segment	Translation
1.[4]	INT:	¿Qué es eso?	What is that?
2.	Ch:	Martillo.	Hammer.
3.	INT:	¿Para qué sirve?	What is it for?
4.	Ch:	(No verbal response)	
5.	INT:	Robert, ¿qué es esto?	Robert, what is this?
6.	Ch:	'tillo. (Martillo)	(Hammer)
7.	INT:	¿Para qué sirve?	What is it used for?
8.	Ch:	Pa jugar.	To play with.
9.	INT:	¿A qué juegas?	What do you play (with it)?
10.	Ch:	Cabrar, cabrar (Clavar, Clavar)	Nailing, nailing.
11.	INT:	¿Qué clavas?	What do you nail?
12.	Ch:	Hmmmmm.	Hmmmmm.
13.	INT:	¿Dónde?	Where?
14.	Ch:	Afuera.	Outside.
15.	INT:	Afuera, hmm. Dime, ¿de qué color es el martillo?	Outside, hmm. Tell me, what color is the hammer?
16.	Ch:	Red. (Rojo)	Red.
17.	INT:	Sí. Y este palito, ¿de qué color es?	Yes. And this little stick, what color is it?
18.	Ch:	White. (Blanco)	White.
19.	INT:	Y eso, ¿qué es? ¿Cómo se llama eso? ¿De qué color es?	And what is that? What is it called? What color is it?
20.	Ch:	Yellow. (Amarillo)	Yellow.
21.	INT:	¿Para qué sirve?	What is it used for?

		Interview Segment	Translation
22.	Ch:	Pa' Jugar.	To play with.
23.	INT:	¿Cómo juegas con él?	How do you play with it?
24.	Ch:	(No verbal response.)	
25.	INT:	¿Qué forma tiene? ¿Es redondo, o qué?	What shape is it? Is it round, or what?
26.	Ch:	Round. (Redondo)	Round.
27.	INT:	¿Te gusta? ¿Por qué te gusta?	Do you like it? Why do you like it?
28.	Ch:	Porque me gusta todo.	Because I like everything.
29.	INT:	Te gusta todo, ¿ah? ¿Sí? ¿Qué es eso que hay aquí?	You like everything, huh? Yeah? What is this over here?

This segment of the interview illustrates the great amount of control that the adult interviewer has over the verbal interaction in the situation. When the child is slow to respond, as in turn 4, the interviewer recycles not the immediately preceding question, but the question which initiated the topic, hammer. The initial sequence repeats in turns 5, 6, and 7, and the appropriate response is given in turn 8. The interviewer keeps hammer as the topic for his turns 9, 11, 13, and 15, the latter intorducing color as a topic as well. Subsequently, the interviewer changes the topic of the questions to color, and elicits a series of color terms in English.

It is curious that the interviewer does not request that the child repeat the first color answer in Spanish, nor does he recycle the question for a Spanish response, in view of the fact that he is interested in the child's Spanish vocabulary. His strategy for controlling the language of the interview may be to keep his own questions in Spanish,

but his obvious understanding of the terms in English as answers to his questions indicates to the child that in this situation, either Spanish or English is acceptable.[5]

The interviewer seems to use turn 19 to attempt to change the topic from color terms to objects again. However, presumably due to a lack of immediate response from the child, the interviewer settles on color as the item to elicit. It is interesting that the interviewer does not insist on the elicitation of the name of the object but asks questions about its use as if it had been named, as in turn 21. The child responds in turn 22 minimally with Pa' jugar 'to play,' but cooperatively as he had in turn 8 previously. The lack of a verbal response to the more difficult how question posed in turn 23 (¿Cómo juegas con él?) leads to the interviewer leaving the 'how' question in turn 25 (¿Qué forma tiene? ¿Es redondo, o qué?), asking instead for a partial description of the object, including in his question a possible answer, redondo. The child either picks up on this suggested answer or evaluates the object on his own to produce the equivalent word in English, 'round'

The interviewer's next question, in turn 27 (¿Te gusta? ¿Por qué te gusta?) seems to offer the child the opportunity to produce more speech for the language sample (Te gusta todo, ¿ah? ¿SÍ? ¿Qué es esto que hay aquí?). The elicited response, in turn 28, is the greatest amount of speech produced by the child so far. It would seem an excellent opportunity to get the child to speak spontaneously, possibly to elaborate on the statement that he likes everything. However, the interviewer does not pursue it, but continues with the elicitation. Staying within the structure of the interview appears to be a goal in

itself, even though the goal of evaluating the child's proficiency in Spanish might be better served by allowing the child to elaborate.

Because the interviewer is in charge, and structures the questions to be answerable with single words or simple phrases, the true language ability of the child is not explored in depth. However, it is clear that the child's linguistic proficiency includes the ability to use two languages appropriately in a single discourse. Moreover because it is obvious from the interviewer's continuation with the questioning that he has understood the child's English responses, legitimacy is accorded the bilingual abilities of both the interviewer and the interviewee in the situation. The interview is characterizable as a bilingual speech situation in the most encompassing sense of the term, although the primary language of the speech situation, determined by the interviewer, is Spanish.

Another segment of the same interview begins a few minutes later, as the interviewer makes the transition from word-elicitation to a grammatic closure task, with a fill-in-the-missing-word format. The entire segment which is considered for analysis is 55 turns long. It is presented in this text for discussion in smaller units. The first seven turns of segment two are considered first:

SEGMENT II: Elicitation Frames

	Interview Segment	Translation
30.	INT: ¿Sí? Dime, ¿qué es eso?	Yes? Tell me, what is that?
31.	Ch: Un marble. (Una canica)	A marble.
32.	INT: ¿Sí? ¿Tú juegas a los marbles? ¿Siempre? ¿Tienes algunos?	Yes? You play marbles? Always? Do you have some?

	Interview Segment		Translation
33.	Ch:	(No verbal response)	
34.	INT:	¿Dónde las tienes?	Where do you have them?
35.	Ch:	Ten[go] . . . Bú'calas. (Búscalas)	I have . . . Look for them.
36.	INT:	¿Sí? Mira. Aquí hay una manzana, aquí hay dos . . .	Yes? Look. Here is one apple. Here are two . . .

This segment of the interview begins with an elicitation of the word for an object, a marble. The word elicited is in English, and when the interviewer subsequently asks about playing with them, he uses the English word instead of the Spanish word, canicas, as in turn 22 (¿Sí? Tú juegas a los marbles? ¿Siempre? ¿Tienes algunos?). These questions are answerable with a simple 'yes' or a head shake, which could have been the child's silent response in 33. The question in turn 34 is an information question (¿Dónde las tienes?) which the child appears to begin to answer, then directs the interviewer to look for them. Evidently the interviewer has failed to understand the child's last turn, for his response, ¿Sí? is inappropriate to its syntax and meaning.[6] The interviewer, as the one in control, uses his response to the child's turn to move on to the next topic of elicitation. As is often the case in adult-child interaction, the adult continues to attend primarily to the structure of the discourse.

Using the same turn to change the patterns of interaction in discourse, the interviewer introduces both a new topic and a new format for word-elicitation in turn 36.

		Interview Segment	Translation
36.	INT:	¿Sí? Mira. Aquí hay una manzana. Aquí hay dos . . .	Yes? Look. Here is one apple. Here are two . . .
37.	Ch:	'Quí hay dos manzanas.	Here are two apples.
38.	INT:	A este hombre le gusta comer. Aquí él está . . .	This man likes to eat. Here he is . . .
39.	Ch:	Cumendo. (Comiendo)	Eating.
40.	INT:	Aquí el papá está abriendo la lata. Aquí la lata está . . .	Here the father is opening the can. Here the can is . . .
41.	Ch:	Break. (Quebrar)	Break.
42.	INT:	Este hombre va a chocar el carro. Aquí el carro está . . .	Here the man is going to crash the car. Here the car is . . .
43.	Ch:	Requiao.[7] (Chocado)	Wrecked.
44.	INT:	Este palo es chico. Éste es más . . .	This stick is small. This one is . . .
45.	Ch:	Grandote.	Real big.
46.	INT:	Estas papas son grandes. Ésta es más . . .	These potatoes are large. This one is . . .
47.	Ch:	Grandota.	Real big.

The previous question-and-answer structure of the discourse (a structure common in casual conversation as well as in interview situations) is changed in turn 36 as the interviewer presents an incomplete sentence for the child to finish, something rarely done deliberately in normal conversation or in real interviews.

In turn 36 the word, mira, 'look,' is the only transition word between the reinforcement word, '¿Sí?' and the new format for word elicitation. Nevertheless, the child quickly determines his task in the discourse as evidenced in turns 37 and 39. The question in turn 40 presents more of a problem to the child. The child has two kinds of information as cues for the expected response: the use of the present progressive of the verb abrir 'to open' in the sentence used to set-up the response frame, and the two pictures used as prompters, one of a man opening a can and the second of the can having been opened. The appropriate Spanish response would be abierta, in English, 'open.' The reported response, 'break,' may have been a transcription error, in view of the fact that the child's previous responses in English had been limited to colors, shapes, and names for objects. The child might have said 'bierta for abierta, or 'brendo for abriendo 'opening,' in which case the response would have been consistent with others where the initial, unstressed syllable is dropped.[8] If the response was 'break,' the child has at least understood the focus of the question as being on the state of the can, using a word with some of the same semantic features as 'open.' Subsequent responses, in turns 43, 44, and 47, indicate that the child understands that the questions focus on the object indicated by the interviewer and require a descriptive word of him, which he produces.

The following examples from the interview, the last to be discussed here, show the child providing responses which are not syntactically

appropriate to the elicitation frame. However, he continues to use both of his languages to address the topics of the discourse, serving goals of communication beyond the interactional goals of the interview.

		Interview Segment	Translation
48.	INT:	Este hombre está pintando. El es un . . .	This man is painting. He is a . . .
49.	Ch:	'Ta pintando una cerca.	He's painting a fence.
50.	INT:	¡Está pintando una cerca! La mamá está escribiendo una carta. Esta es la carta que ella . . .	He's painting a fence! The mother is writing the letter. Here is the letter that she . . .
51.	Ch:	Did. (Hizo)	Did.
52.	INT:	La mamá está limpiando la cafetera. Aquí la cafetera está . . .	The mother is cleaning the coffee pot. Here the coffeepot is . . .
53.	Ch:	Coffee. (Café)	Coffee
54.	INT:	Este hombre está clavando un clavo. El está poniendo este cuadro en la pared. Aquí el cuadro está . . .	This man is nailing a nail. He is putting this picture on the wall. Here the picture is . . .
55.	Ch:	Está componao.[9]	It's fixed.

In turn 49 child seems to fill in information which was omitted by the interviewer in his previous turn, by supplying the word, cerca 'fence.' The response is inappropriate to the frame created by the interviewer, but here the child seems to be cooperating with the interviewer in creating a more meaningful discourse, since it is obvious from the picture that the man is painting a fence, and the interviewer has not mentioned that word. The interviewer's response in turn 50 is

a repetition of the child's response in turn 49, and serves as reinforcement for the child for cooperating in the interaction. He does not continue that discourse topic, however, as one might do in normal conversation, nor does he try other ways to elicit the word, pintor.

In his concern for maintaining the structure of the discourse, that is, the interview format, the interviewer disregards discourse content and topic continuity, which would be relevant in normal adult adult conversation. The child appears to be addressing real communication goals, which the interviewer does not in this situation.

The interviewer uses the second part of turn 50 to elicit the past tense of escribir 'to write.' The child's response, rather than the solicited escribió, is an English past tense of a more general verb, 'do,' hacer. This example in particular tells us much about the child's bilingual ability. He has listened to a response frame in Spanish and has understood that a past tense is being elicited. However, he appears to switch mentally to English to process that information and to produce a response. The response is in the correct form, the past tense, and is semantically appropriate to the elicitation, although the verb used is more general than the one elicited.

The child is more successful at serving the discourse goal of communication than at completing the verbal frame of the interview with the appropriate response, whether in English or Spanish, as turns 53 and 55 illustrate. In turn 53, coffee names what a coffeepot contains, but does not provide a word for the state of the coffeepot, as elicited in turn 52. In turn 55, the child indicates an appropriate focus on the cuadro "picture," but does not provide the target response expected by the interviewer. However, the response that the picture is fixed shows that

the child knows the part of speech elicited, i.e., a past participle, and provides an informative analysis of how hanging the picture has resolved a prior state of affairs.

The analysis of this segment of the interview reinforces some conclusions made previously and suggests some additional ones. First, it is clear that English is a language which is legitimate in this interaction, not only because both participants are bilingual, but also because the interviewer has approved of it (especially by means of his own use of marbles in turn 32) and does not discourage it. Second, it is obvious that the interview situation imposes its own goals of interaction on its participants. For example, when the interviewer fails to understand his directive made in turn 35, the child does not interrupt to protest the inappropriate response, and the interviewer does not indicate in turn 36 that he has not understood it. This seems to be in keeping with the goal that we hypothesized for the child earlier, i.e., that he wants to keep the session going so that it will terminate as soon as possible. Third, the child appears to make communication more of a goal of the discourse than the interviewer does, using the two languages in his repertoire to do so.

This is illustrated not only in operations where he uses a noun or an adjective in English consistent with the form requested in Spanish, but in the operations which are evidence of the integration of the grammars. The propositions and syntax used in an elicitation frame by the interviewer in one language seem to be matched up to the other language by the child, and the word elicited is structurally appropriate to both, as in turn 51.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the examination of these two small segments of a child adult interview has suggested at least two areas of further inquiry, one as to the nature of the proper evaluation of bilingual linguistic proficiency, and the other as to the nature of child adult interviews. For future inquiry into bilingual proficiency, this analysis indicates that the notion of interference should not be applied to cases of language choice in situations where two languages operate as equal parts of a single linguistic proficiency, the speaker exhibiting a bilingual communicative competence. Terms with which we characterize bilinguals, such as 'balanced,' may be dysfunctional in that they appear to legitimize the description of a type of person without regard to language use situations which make varying demands on each bilingual's range of language abilities. Furthermore, labels such as 'dominant language' may be inappropriate for a person who is bilingual as a child and who demonstrates equal preference in the use of his languages, as this five-year-old seems to do.

It is unfortunate that the linguistic proficiency shown by this bilingual child cannot be recognized in the current approach to the assessment of language proficiency. The need for placing children in bilingual education programs on the basis of their discrete monolingual proficiencies may continue to be, for the time being, the most practical approach to language assessment. However, the complementary use of two languages in a single speech situation indicates a real linguistic proficiency, and should be recognized as such. Further empirical work is needed to provide input to an approach to a bilingual model of linguistic

proficiency, based on the legitimate abilities of bilinguals.

Future inquiry as to the nature of child-adult interviews will no doubt have as relevant variables the ages of the participants, their previous relationship to each other, the setting of the interview, and the goal of the adult interviewer as to the outcomes of the interview. The child's goals in the interview will likely be ascertainable by his behavior during the interaction, as manifested in his turns throughout the discourse. Certain factors will remain constant, such as the status of the adult in comparison to the child, and the fact that an interviewer, by definition of his role in the interaction, is in control of topic selection and can manipulate turn-taking almost at will. In bilingual interviews such as this one, the interviewer may take the lead in controlling the language of the interview by his own language choice, but unless there is specific mention of inappropriate language use, contributions in the other language may be made as long as both parties are bilingual. It is evident that a child-adult bilingual interview has the potential for revealing much about the integration of a bilingual's language system as a single resource for communication.

FOOTNOTES

[1]These transcripts were made available by Dr. John Bordie, Director of FLEC; their transfer was facilitated by Ms. Winona Blanchard, also of FLEC. Their help with this effort was much appreciated. I am also very much indebted to the interviewers and transcribers for their data.

[2]Ricardo Cornejo, a participant in the project, reports that the stimuli used were photographs from the 1961 edition of the ITPA (1969:53). He also outlines (1969:55-59) six different types of language tasks, referred to in this paper as language elicitation techniques, which make up the interviews. The interview segments analyzed here appear to be part of the auditory vocal-automatic section, where the child completes the interviewer's sentence with the grammatically correct word, and the tactile descriptive section, in which the child is asked to describe various toys and talk about what games are played with them.

[3]I would like to gratefully acknowledge the help of my NCBR colleague David Thrift, who first looked through the many pages of transcripts which we received, selecting several interviews from them for further analysis. His suggestions based on his initial examination of the interviews facilitated the present analysis.

[4]Each person's turn in the conversation is numbered for easy reference. The abbreviations used are: INT for 'interviewer', Ch for 'child'.

[5]In a discussion following this presentation, Gustavo Gonzalez--another participant in the original data collection effort--pointed out that the interviewers had been instructed not to correct the children nor to show disapproval of their language choice. So, although the

objective was to elicit answers in Spanish, the interviewer's secondary consideration was not to make the interview a negative or stressful experience for the child. The child was correct, then, in assuming that either language was appropriate in the situation.

[6]The transcript indicates that this word was not clearly audible on the tape; the interviewer's inappropriate response was probably due to a real comprehension problem.

[7]A loan word from the English verb, 'to wreck,' conjugated as a Spanish past participle.

[8]Subsequent to the original presentation of this paper, other transcripts of this interview came to my attention, which show disagreement about the interpretation of this response. The forms /bren/ and /bien/ are reported by other transcribers. The discussion in the text reflects this discovery.

[9]A non-standard version of the past participle of componer, i.e., *componado, from which the child deletes the medial 'd'. The -ado suffix is a productive morpheme for verbs ending in -ar; similarly, -er verbs usually take -ido. This verb, however, has an irregular past participle, compuesto. The child uses a productive rule of suffixation which indicates that his grammar of Spanish is in a developmental stage.

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